

**BROOKLYN'S REAL NEWSPAPERS**

# The Brooklyn Paper

Including The Brooklyn Heights Paper, Carroll Gardens-Cobble Hill Paper, DUMBO Paper and the Downtown News

**A Brooklyn Papers Publication**

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## SUPERSIZED JAIL

### City to double capacity of House of D

By Ariella Cohen  
The Brooklyn Papers

The city Department of Corrections will double the prisoner capacity of the Brooklyn House of Detention as part of a scheme to add retail to the jail's first floor.

The retail proposal was first reported in The Brooklyn Papers earlier this month — but the city withheld its plan to expand the 11-story jail with a rear annex facing State Street until this week.

"We thought as long as we are building, why not add more cells?" said Correction spokesman Tom Antenen.

The proposal will add 800 beds to jail, which at present is home to 760 cells. The jail sits at the rapidly gentrifying intersection of Atlantic Avenue and Smith Street.

Inmates were moved out of the jail in 2003, but sometimes shuffle in and out as they await trials in nearby courtrooms, which can be accessed through an underground tunnel.

"We can build a little more and have capacity for all the people that are traveling through [Downtown Brooklyn] to get to the court," said Antenen, adding that the new cells would reduce the number of wire-mesh windowed jail vans shuttling prisoners through Brooklyn and help lessen traffic congestion.

Area residents said this week that they would fight the expansion.

"We want retail, but not if it comes with doubling the jail," said Sandy Balboza, president of Atlantic Avenue Betterment Association.

"We hear the offer and we don't accept."

One letter demanding a better explanation for the new plan has already gone out to the city.

"If the jail can't go away we need to know why," said Sue Wolfe, president of the Boerum Hill Association.

The city says the answer is obvious.

"Why build a new jail when you can add onto one that is in pretty good shape and already in the inventory," said Antenen.

The House of D is the only municipal jail still standing in Brooklyn and since it closed in 2003, inmates have been sent to Rikers Island. But officials say crime levels could easily rise and Rikers could become overcrowded.

The jail population is down now but there are fluctuations that we need to be ready for," Antenen said. "A city needs jails in multiple areas."

When the House of Detention was built in 1957 architectural critics compared its harsh modern lines to Manhattan's UN Headquarters.



A 40-story condo is under construction at Myrtle Avenue and Flatbush Avenue Extension in Fort Greene.

## D'Town glitz jumps Flatbush Avenue

### Construction begins on Myrtle condos

By Ariella Cohen  
The Brooklyn Papers

The first fruit of Downtown Brooklyn's massive upsize re-zoning will be a squish court on Myrtle Avenue.

Ground has been broken on a 40-story luxury condo building on Myrtle Avenue directly across Flatbush

Avenue Extension from Forest City Ratner's Metrotech office campus.

The 309-unit building — its address is 306 Gold St. — is the first residential high-rise being built following approval in 2004 of the skyscraper-friendly Downtown Brooklyn Plan.

Downtown Brooklyn planners were crowing this week.

"For years, when you crossed the

[Manhattan] bridge onto Flatbush, you would see nondescript buildings and gas stations," said Michael Burke, director of the Downtown Brooklyn Council.

"Now, you will see a nice-looking building with beautiful streetscapes."

The building, which sits between Johnson Street and Myrtle Avenue, See **GLITZ** on page 4

## White Yassky barred from black debate

By Rachel Monahan  
The Brooklyn Papers

The only white candidate for an open congressional seat in a predominantly black Brooklyn district was barred from a candidate forum held by a coalition of black churches last weekend.

The decision to block City Councilman David Yassky (D-Brooklyn Heights) from the March 11 event — which drew about 30 people — was part of an effort by Churches United for Worldwide Action to ensure that a black person is elected to replace retiring Rep. Major Owens.

The 11th Congressional District "was carved out for a minority representation," said the group's leader, Rev. Jacob Underwood.

The district, which stretches from East Flatbush through Crown Heights and Park Slope to include a small piece of Brooklyn Heights, was drawn under Civil Rights-era legislation in response to two centuries of black disenfranchisement. The district is currently 60 percent black and 27 white, according to the Census.

Underwood suggested to reporters that Yassky, who lives in Brooklyn Heights, would be invited to future events.

"I think [the district] is designed to make sure the African-American community is energetically and enthusiastically

represented," Yassky told The Brooklyn Papers. "The majority of voters are African-American, and I'm running to represent the community as energetically as I can."

Any group that holds a forum should invite all candidates and "trust voters" to make up their minds, Yassky said.

The district has had a black representative since 1969, and the seat is viewed as having symbolic importance because it was held by Shirley Chisholm, the first black woman to serve in Congress.

Owens followed her in the seat.

With one white candidate facing four blacks, race was bound to be a factor in the campaign. Yassky has consistently raised the issue in his standard stump speech, saying that despite his skin color, he will be a "progressive" voice in Congress.

The moderator of the forum, the Rev. Kermin Williams, of Agape Fellowship Church in East Flatbush, received the loudest applause when he declared:

"As we know there is a candidate who is campaigning for this seat who's not black. The fact that's even being allowed to be pursued by someone that is not a part of our struggle and someone who is not black is of great concern to us."

Williams continued, "is the fact that we fear, with four black candidates running

See **DEBATE** on page 4



## Bob-ing for laughs

### Newhart plays Brooklyn Center

By Chiara V. Cowan  
The Brooklyn Papers

Bob Newhart hasn't changed. He acts the same, sounds the same, makes audiences laugh the same, and — lucky guy — even looks the same. It must be his ability to find humor in any situation. Be it himself, Dr. Robert (Bob) Hartley, Dick Loudon, Papa Elf or Morty Flickman — just some of the characters he's played in his more than 40-year career as funny-man extraordinaire — he's still the same talented guy he was at the start.

And from the looks of his list of credits, his career is far from over. In fact, he'll perform in this borough — for the first time ever — as part of Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts's series at Brooklyn College in Midwood on Saturday, March 25.

**Keeping busy**

Last summer, Newhart, 76, spent some time in South Africa shooting the sequel to the 2004 TV movie "The Librarian: Quest for the Spear" with Noah Wyle (from "ER"). At the end of the month, he'll embark on a three-city stand-up tour to Philadelphia, Englewood, NJ, and Brooklyn. The back and forth, however, is nothing out of the ordinary for Newhart who has been city-hopping to make people laugh since 1960.

His routines are infamous. A few of his '60s recordings topped the charts. "The Button-Down Mind of Bob Newhart" hit No. 1. He recorded seven more after it and won three Grammys. During his upcoming tour, he'll perform two of the tried and true — most likely "The Driving Instructor" and "Sir Walter Raleigh," he told GO Brooklyn in a recent interview. He'll throw in a new routine as well, something sure to make audiences laugh — nothing about politics.

"I've never thought of myself as an educator," said Newhart. "I see myself as an entertainer. With politics you automatically alienate half of your audience."

**Fresh material**

His new routine will involve observations on the "crazy" planet we inhabit, traveling today, everyday experiences and religion. (Newhart was raised a Catholic, which allows him to poke a little fun, based on personal experience.)

On average he makes 30 to 35 stand-up performances per year. All of that, on top of movie roles and TV appearances. His three-episode guest appearance on "ER" garnered him an Emmy nomination in 2004, and most recently, he's been checking in on ABC's hit series "Desperate Housewives."

"I was highly complimented when [Desperate Housewives' executive] Mark Cherry called my agent," Newhart said. "They could've gotten anyone in the world. They probably could've gotten [Dick] Cheney. He's probably tired of all the black for the recent [shooting] incident. He probably would have said, 'to hell with it.'"

See **NEWHART** on page 8

## Park Slope activist Jackie Connor, 63

By Louise Crawford  
The Brooklyn Papers

Sitting on the steps of Old First Reformed Church at Carroll Street and Seventh Avenue in an old flannel shirt and baseball cap, chatting up strangers and friends, Jackie Connor looked to some like a street person.

But those people didn't know Jackie Connor.

Connor, who died on March 8 after a vigorous battle with lung cancer, was a civic activist, a crime watchdog, a tenant advocate, a self-described agent provocateur and, according to Michael Gordon, the former owner of the Mojo Cafe, "more effective than 311 in improving life in Park Slope."

Her memorial service Sunday at the St. Francis Xavier School auditorium attracted a cross section of Park Slope and surrounding neighborhoods, a testament to Connor's renown. Everyone from neighbors to friends, to cops and cops, were on hand not to bury Connor, but to praise her.

"I don't think the people of Park Slope realized just how much they owe their quality of life to Jackie," said City Councilman David Yassky (D-Brooklyn Heights).

There were platters of Italian food, bakery cookies, live doo-wop music, and presentation boards with photographs, newspaper clippings, and

See **JACKIE** on page 4



## Purim it on

Two rabbis whose congregations are doors apart on Remsen Street in Brooklyn Heights — Aaron (Zorro) Raskin of the Orthodox Congregation B'nai Avraham and Serge (King Tut) Lippe of the Reform Brooklyn Heights Synagogue — adopt an ecumenical pose during celebrations marking the Purim holiday Tuesday. At left (top) Jolee Cohen, 9, and sister Shavna, 7, enjoy pizza at the Bay Ridge Jewish Center; (bottom) Weinberger siblings Tova, 10, Akiva, 6, and Adina, 7, party at B'nai Avraham. Purim commemorates the salvation of Jews in ancient Persia (now Iran) after a regent named Haman proposed their extermination.

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Red White & Bubbly

# Stole eyelash glue!

By Lilo H. Stainton

The Brooklyn Papers

They say the price of beauty can be high.

It was certainly true for one thief whose fake-eyelash fetish cost her dearly, despite a price tag that was only a pittance, cops said.

Police arrested a 21-year-old beauty-seeker on March 8 after she attacked a pharmacy worker who tried to stop her from stealing a \$2 tube of eyelash glue. The suspect snatched the essential adhesive from the shelves of the drug store on Fulton Mall near Gold Street around 11 a.m.

When the 37-year-old employee confronted sticky-fingered glamour girl, she slugged him in the eye and threatened him with a knife, police said. The woman dashed out the door with the glue, leaving behind her victim with a dramatic eye of his own — all black, blue and swollen shut, cops said.

But the thieving fashionista didn't get far. Police stopped the woman, arrested her on robbery charges and even recovered the pilfered beauty product. After all, the suspect wouldn't need false eyelashes — or the glue to apply them — once in jail.

## Metocard scam

A Staten Island woman lost her wallet to a robber who jumped her in the Jay Street subway station on March 9.

Police said the 31-year-old victim walked into the station's Willoughby Street entrance around 2:30 p.m., headed for the A train. As she approached the turnstile, she removed her wallet and prepared to remove her Metocard.

But a sly thief snuck up and snatched the billfold before the

## POLICE

woman could slip through the gate and into the subway system. The robber made a run for the streets — escaping before the victim could get a good look at him — with her Social Security card, Medicaid identification card, health insurance and other ID, plus the Metocard.

## Sneaker scam

The sneakers sure seemed like a steal.

But the lure of low-cost kicks actually left a trio of teenage boys the target of a robbery scam on Fulton Mall.

Police said youngsters — two 17-year-olds and an 18-year-old — became victims during a March 7 excursion along the Downtown strip that is some shoppers' idea of paradise. Around 4 p.m., a thief posing as a salesman promised the three boys "a good deal on sneakers," if they would follow him into a dark hallway off the busy pedestrian mall of discount jeans, jackets and footwear.

But once inside a corridor near Duffield Street — which was, of course, devoid of sneakers — the salesman told the boys he had a gun, and insisted the boys turn over their cash, cellphones and other property. The young victims complied and the sticky-fingered salesman bolted from his fake place of business with the valuables.

Police are searching for a 6-foot-1 man, weighing roughly 160 pounds. Officials remind shoppers to follow the golden rule of retail: if it seems too good to be true, it bound to not be a bargain, even on Fulton Mall.



The Brooklyn Papers / Tom Clinton

## Helping hands

An unidentified motorist locked his keys in a vehicle parked on Clinton St. March 13, but then flagged down Ladder 118 as it passed. The firemen opened the door in a few minutes and went on their way.

## Homeheist

A trio of teens robbed a man returning to his Boerum Hill home after work on March 11, police said.

The young thieves surrounded the 30-year-old victim on Pacific Street, between Boerum Place and Court Street, around 5:45 p.m. They snatched the man's cash — \$20 — and his Blackberry device, and dashed east on Pacific Street, toward Boerum Place.

The man described his attackers as teenagers around 16 or 17 years old. Two were white Hispanics, 5-foot-8 tall, and the third was a black boy, 5-foot-9, according to police.

## Seek stalker

When a stranger offered a 10-year-old Brooklyn Heights boy a ride, the youngster knew enough to just say no. And that choice probably spared the boy a fate far worse than the terrifying two-hour stalking he suffered on March 6.

A bald man in a beige SUV pulled alongside the young victim as he walked on Clark Street, near Cadman Plaza West, around 5 p.m., rolled down the window and asked the boy to "go for a ride," police said.

The scared youngster declined, but the stranger's interest persisted, and he trailed the boy around the neighborhood until the victim managed to elude him and dash home at around 9 p.m.

The boy and his mother reported the crime to police, who are now looking for a bald man, 5-foot-9, dressed that day in a black sweat shirt. The boy was not able to tell police the man's race.

## Garage rob

Someone stole a \$1,500 home-stereo system from the back seat of a car parked at an Albee Square garage on March 12.

Police said the 26-year-old driver left her vehicle in the commercial facility around 5 p.m. When she returned a half-hour later, the passenger-side window had been busted open and the Bose home stereo system she left inside had disappeared.

A sign on the wall warned her that the garage is not responsible for lost valuables.

## Jewelry taken

Gold jewelry worth more than \$3,000 disappeared from a Ninth Street home the same day workers arrived to repair the boiler, police said.

The 49-year-old victim stashed her jewelry box inside a bureau drawer around 7 a.m. on March 4 and left her apartment, near Second Avenue. When she returned at 6 a.m. the following day, her gold engagement ring and a pair of gold earrings were gone.

The woman told police that she suspects the boiler mechanic and his helper, since there was no sign of a break-in.

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## POLICE BLOTTER

# High-noon heist on P'P West

By Lilo H. Stainton

The Brooklyn Papers

Two teens robbed a woman walking along Prospect Park West during a holdup in broad daylight on March 9.

The pair followed the 36-year-old victim from a nearby bank and surrounded her on the block between President and Carroll streets, shortly after noon, police said. One thief insisted, "Give me the phone, give me the phone," snatched the cellphone from the victim's hand and shoved her to the ground, where she scraped her knee.

Police are now searching for a black teenage girl, 16 or 17 years old, 5-feet-11 tall and 130 pounds, dressed that day in a black North Face jacket. But they have few details on her teenage accomplice.

### Restaurant robbed

Thieves busted through the wall of a Seventh Avenue eatery to steal \$300 last week, police said.

The burglars pried open the sidewalk cellar door and snuck into the joint, near 11th Street, after workers closed up around 8:30 pm on March 11.

When the 40-year-old manager arrived the next day, he discovered that prowlers broke through a back wall to get into the restaurant. Once inside, the thugs grabbed the cash register — filled with just three \$100 bills — and fled through the back door.

### Hi-tech burg

A quick-acting thief snatched \$3,120 in electrical equipment from a car parked on Eighth Avenue on March 9, police said.

The robber managed to slip inside the car, between Sixth and Seventh avenues, shortly after 4:15 pm, without breaking any locks or glass. The thief removed the electrical goods from under the front passenger seat, where the 65-year-old owner stashed a \$2,500 device for locating satellites and several meters designed to test other machines.

### Caddy, credit stolen

Someone snatched a trio of luxury watches, a Cadillac and two credit cards with plenty of potential — a \$21,000 haul all together — from a Carroll Street home on March 8, police said.

The thief bent back the security bars on the building, near Third Avenue, sometime between 12:30 and 6:30 am. While the victim slumbered inside, the robber grabbed a watch box with three timepieces — including a \$4,000 Cartier model — a diamond-encrusted crucifix pendant, two credit cards and keys for the woman's Cadillac LTS.

Back on the street, the robber snatched the Caddy itself, a 2003 black sedan, and quickly wracked up \$12,500 in fraudulent charges on the cards.

### Jewelry taken

Gold jewelry worth more than \$3,000 disappeared from a Ninth Street home the same day workers arrived to repair the boiler, police said.

The 49-year-old victim stashed her jewelry box inside a bureau drawer around 7 am on March 4 and left her apartment, near Second Avenue. When she returned at 6 am the following day, her gold engagement ring and a pair of gold earrings were gone.

The woman told police that she suspects the boiler mechanic and his helper, since there was no sign of a break-in.

## Bust burglar thanks to cyber-security

By Lilo H. Stainton

The Brooklyn Papers

A high-tech hook-up allowed a Park Slope business owner who was secluded in his country home to help police bust a serial bar burglar.

Detectives at the 78th Precinct arrested a 42-year-old homeless man on March 10 and charged him with burglarizing the Park Slope Ale House several nights earlier. Police believe the suspect, who they said has a history of burglary convictions, also broke into Bar Mimow earlier this month.

The arrest hinged on help from the 41-year-old owner of the Ale House, on Sixth Avenue near Fifth Street, who installed a network of security cameras — both inside and outside the pub — and linked the video to a live Internet feed, said police and a bartender at the pub. The business was also wired with a burglar alarm.

When the alarm sounded at 1:42 am on March 7, the hookup allowed the owner to witness the crime — online — even though he was miles away. The burglar busted through the door, dashed behind the bar and wrenched the cash register free. By 1:47 am he was back out the door, the cash register — with \$300 left in the drawers — tucked under his arm.

The alarm also summoned police, who arrived at the Ale House moments later to find the door open, but the thief gone. They dusted the pub for fingerprints and reviewed the security video — which showed the robber casing the pub for at least 10 minutes before he broke in — and caught up with the suspect several days later.

Police declined to name the alleged burglar. "All I know is we got him," said the bartender, who declined to give her name.

Police believe the suspect also broke into Bar Mimow, on Ninth Street off Seventh Avenue, the morning of March 3. The watering hole closed at 1:30 am, but when the 44-year-old owner arrived at 4 am to do paperwork, she found the door forced open and papers scattered about her office — but nothing missing.

The woman told police burglars also hit the bar in mid-February, but details on that break-in were not available.

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By Susan Cosier  
The Brooklyn Papers

Bay Ridges have been putting in more calls than usual to Community Board 10 this winter about the number of homeless people loitering around at the end of the R subway line at 95th Street.

According to CB10 District Manager Josephine Beckmann, residents have reported homeless people inside businesses, at the public library, and camping out on the steps of St. Patrick's Church, especially during cold snaps this winter.

"This year we've received 10 or so calls compared to about five in previous years," she said.

Although the calls are the same sort of complaints that people have reported in the past, this year's calls are more concentrated in and around 95th Street. Recently a call



Eric, a homeless man, sits on a bench in the park at 95th Street and Fourth Avenue.

## Purse, prescription drugs taken from senior citizen

By Lilo H. Stainton  
The Brooklyn Papers

A robber left an elderly Bay Ridge resident in need of an emergency run to the drug store after he stole her purse on March 9.

Police said the thief snuck up behind the 70-year-old woman as she walked along 80th Street, near Ridge Boulevard, just after 1 p.m. The robber quickly grabbed the victim's bag and dashed off along Colonial Road.

The red purse held five crisp \$20 bills, her house keys and personal papers, plus 10 bottles of prescription pills, police said.

**Quick charge**  
A sneaky thief rang up a \$7,000 bill on a credit card he had just stolen from a woman's bag on March 8, police said.

The unseen suspect plucked a wallet from the purse of a 73-year-old woman waiting in line at a drug store on Third Avenue, around 12:30 p.m. The victim said the bag hung from her shoulder, zipped closed, as she waited to pay for her purchases.

But once at the counter, the woman discovered her purse was open and the wallet was gone. The thief scored the

Visa card, which he quickly put to work.

### Body found

A gruesome discovery disrupted the normal morning routine for fishermen, joggers and others who visited the 69th Street Pier on March 9. NYPD's Harbor Unit pulled the body of a dead man from the drink at 9:50 a.m. Cops closed off the pier, off Shore Parkway near Bay Ridge Avenue, but the cause of death — and the victim's identity — remained a mystery.

The medical examiner planned an autopsy early this week to determine what killed the unfortunate fellow, and police launched an investigation into his death. Additional information on the crime wasn't available by press time.

### 62nd Precinct

#### Stapler assault

A dispute between two middle-school students in Gravesend turned ugly when one hurled a stapler at the other.

Police arrested a 13-year-old girl following the March 7 attack at Intermediate School 96, on Avenue P at West 11th Street. The fight broke out around 3:30 p.m. when the teen punched and kicked her 12-year-old victim, then grabbed for the hefty desk accessory. The weapon left the victim with cuts and bruises on her face.

**Teen wasteland**  
A half-dozen teenagers robbed a Dyker Heights convenience store after school let out March 13, police said.

The posse of three boys and three girls rushed into the 86th Street bodega, at 14th Avenue, at 3:30 p.m. and began snatching items from the shelves. The boys and one girl then forced their way behind the counter, where they shoved the deli worker to the floor and held him down.

The six suspects fled along

86th Street, running toward Bay Seventh Street, with their pockets full. The employee, who hurt his leg and hand during the struggle, could provide police few details about the robbers' appearance.

### Early-bird rob

A woman's shopping excursion was thwarted by a thief who stole her bag in the parking lot of the Bensonhurst department store on March 8.

But police had the last say when they arrested the robber and saddled him with robbery charges. Cops said the suspect sneaked up behind the 34-year-old victim as she made her way across the lot towards the discount store, on Bay Parkway, just off the Belt Parkway, at 9 a.m. The thug pushed her to the ground, grabbed her bag and sped away in a red, four-door sedan.

But the thief didn't get far. Police stopped the red car on 70th Street, between Fourth and Fifth avenues, and arrested the alleged robber.

### Four arrested

When the 17-year-old saw it all, he made the right call. Police said the teen dialed 911 after he saw four young thugs, two aged 14 and two aged 15, try to steal a bicycle from a man riding along 70th Street on March 7. The quartet did manage to grab the victim's money, but — thanks to the witness's call — police tracked them down, recovered the cash and arrested the alleged young deviants.

### Nab tech thieves

It's a common crime, but with a refreshing ending. Police arrested two teenagers who snatched an MP3 player from a 13-year-old boy on March 8. The thugs — ages 15 and 17 — jumped the victim on the corner of Bath Avenue and Bay Parkway.

The 13-year-old, 2-15, grabbed his wrist and twisted it until he gave up the digital music device.

### Coat snatched

Spring may be coming, but a trio of teenage thieves was still looking to expand its winter wardrobe last week.

Police said the three thugs came upon their 12-year-old victim on the corner of Bay Parkway and 86th Street around 4 p.m. on March 6. One asked the boy, "How much for your coat?"

Before the youngster could decide if the jacket was for sale, a second suspect said, "Give me your coat," and snatched it from his shoulders, while the third thug kept watch.

The three thieves bolted down the block with the stolen coat and the victim ran into a nearby store and called police.

### Game boy

The thief must have been desperate for excitement when he threatened to kill a man who tried to hold onto his PlayStation Portable.

Police said the thug attacked the victim while the man stood on Bay Parkway, near 77th Street, playing the game, around 5 p.m. on March 10. The robber first asked for directions, then snatched the portable device.

When the victim tried to grab the PSP back, the thief pulled a knife and insisted, "If you touch me again, I will kill you." The robber, described only as a man with a pierced eyebrow, then fled on Bay Parkway with the game in hand.

### High-dollar haul

A burglar scored thousands in cash, jewelry and critical identification from a safe stashed in a Bay Parkway home on March 8, police said.

When the 35-year-old victim left her building, near 63rd Street, she locked the downstairs door, but left the front door to her second-floor apartment unlocked, since the family downstairs was at home. But when she returned at 1:30 p.m., it was clear someone had still managed to get inside her home.

The safe contained \$7,000, jewelry and several passports, police said.

came in about a homeless woman at the library on 95th St. and Fourth Avenue who was unable to move or get up, explained Beckmann.

In an effort to address concerns, CB10 held a meeting on the topic on Thursday, March 16, which followed the city's annual homeless count.

At the meeting, committee members discussed future outreach to the homeless people in the area with the NYPD and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

On a warm day last week, there were barely any homeless to count around 95th Street. Pigeon Park was vacant, the steps of St. Patrick's were clear, and the businesses were homeless free. Now, business owners call the police when homeless people come in.

"We just call the cops and they take them away," said an employee of Laundry King, a 24-hour laundry, where home-

less people sometimes come in and sleep on the chairs.

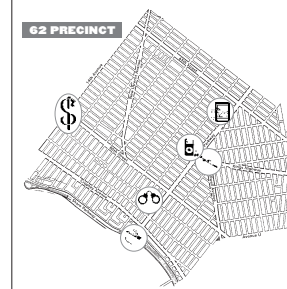
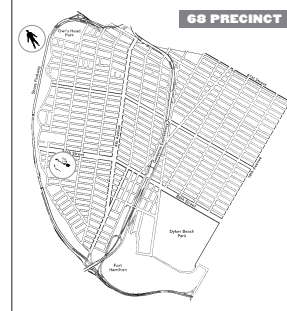
Whether it is the weather, sweeps of the subway, or police involvement that deter the homeless, more head counts and CB10 meetings on homeless concerns are planned for the future so the community can continue to "get insight" into the problem, said Beckmann.

Until then, the homeless in Bay Ridge may continue to seek warmer temperatures inside or below ground on the subway when it is cold.

"You can't really blame them," said an employee of a donut shop at 97th Street and Fourth Avenue about the homeless who try to get warm in the store.

But that doesn't mean that they are welcome — the shopkeeper said he calls the cops every time a homeless person comes in.

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## City settles CB2 wrongful-fire suit

By Ariella Cohen  
The Brooklyn Papers

Stung by allegations that Community Board 2's chair Shirley McRae acted inappropriately towards its district manager — including sending her a bizarre e-mail about the benefits of having sex — the city has reportedly settled a wrongful termination suit by the fired employee.

Kings County Supreme Court Justice Wayne Saitta ruled last month that McRae broke board by-laws when she terminated District Manager Olanike Alabi without putting it to a vote of the full board. Alabi told the Brooklyn Papers the city is agreeing to pay \$100,000 in back pay and damages.



Olanike Alabi

Kim Miu, spokeswoman for the city law department, would not confirm the settlement.

"We have nothing to say about the case at this point," Miu said.

Alabi lost her job after a four-hour, closed-door hearing on her performance as district manager — a meeting called by McRae.

Alabi was appointed by Robert Evans, the board's chair prior to McRae.

Alabi claimed that McRae forwarded her a group e-mail, subject-headed "Did you know..." that seemed to be encouraging sexual activity.

The e-mail was presented as evidence that McRae had acted improperly towards the district manager.

Even Alabi's supporters found the e-mail unconvincing of anything but the dol-drum of community board life.

"I choose to believe [the e-mail] was nothing more than a bad joke," said Evans.

McRae, who remains the chair of CB2, declined to comment on the city settlement with Alabi.

Because the district manager is one of few paid positions at a community board, terminations are extremely rare — making lawsuits even rarer.

"I've never even heard of a case like this," said Micky Josephs, deputy assistant director at the city Office of Management and Budget [OMB], which oversees community boards.

And because of the singularity of the case, it has been raised in at least one OMB memorandum as example of what not to do in when you are community board chair.

Alabi, now working at a local health care union, said she was considering a run for the Assembly seat currently occupied by Roger Green (D-Fort Greene). Green, who resigned after pleading guilty to falsifying expense records, was re-elected anyway but is said to be considering a run for Congress.

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# HEALTH, MIND & BODY

4 AWP THE BROOKLYN PAPERS March 18, 2006

## DEBATE...

Continued from page 1

for this seat, this white candidate could win by default, because if you knock each other off then he'll pick up the remains."

One of the black candidates, state Sen. Carl Andrews (D-Crown Heights), seeking to court an audience beyond the room, waited for the camera from Brooklyn's News 12 television to start taping before responding to Williams' remarks.

"First of all, let me say that this district has been and still is under the Voting Rights Act of 1965," Andrews said. "Having said that, we all know that in the Civil Rights struggle, it was not only blacks who participated in it—it was whites, Latinos, lots of different ethnic groups, religious groups."

He said all of the candidates had the ability to represent the district, but that the community should place a high value on involvement in the community and "diversity."

Owens sought to allay fears that the black candidates couldn't win, saying he was competitive with Yassky in the white parts of the district.

"I'm the only person who takes white votes from the white candidate," said Owens, citing his "politics and... being out there as an activist in Park Slope and Prospect Heights."

Williams suggested having several of the remaining candidates drop out so the black vote is not split.

After the forum, Owens said that his dropping out didn't make sense given his appeal across the whole district. And Assemblyman Nick Perry (D-Flatbush) said that contrary to reports, he was going to stay in the race to the end.

But Andrews said he'd consider it.

"If a compelling argument is made to me that I should drop out, I would consider that," said Andrews.

None of the candidates voiced an objection to Yassky's absence. Perry said it was appropriate, given the church group's preference to elect a black candidate.

"Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, race is a factor in this particular competition," said Perry, who arrived an hour late. "Without any doubt, Mr. Yassky's candidacy is calculated on the racial demographics of the candidates in the race."

The contest's other candidate, City Councilwoman Yvette Clarke (D-Flatbush), did not attend. Her spokesman, Rance Huff, cited the church group's disorganization.

"What they're claiming to have done is to have called the councilmember on her cell and left a message about the details of the forum," said Huff. "It's not an acceptable way of confirming a candidate's going to be there."

Brooklyn falls under the Voting Rights Act because New York State once had an education test for voting, which blocked minorities from the voting booth, said Arthur Eisenberg of the New York Civil Liberties Union. Changes in designated Voting Rights election districts must be reviewed by the Department of Justice to avoid backsliding, he said.

But the act "certainly doesn't say that you have to be black or you have to be white to run in a particular district," Eisenberg said. "If it were to say that, the Voting Rights Act itself would be unconstitutional."

The form was held at Grace Baptist Church, in East New York.

## JACKIE...

Continued from page 1

memorabilia that conveyed the life of this fiery and fearless mentor of four who was a fighter and advocate for her community.

"She didn't want a wake," said her daughter, Tracy, a former Brooklyn Papers and New York Post reporter who is now a reporter at the Daily News. "She wanted people to come together, listen to music, and have a good time. But she did say, 'I also want them to cry,'" she said.

There were plenty of tears all right, but far more laughter for a woman who dealt courageously with adversity her entire life.

Born in Park Slope in 1942, she had polio as a child and spent two years at a hospital on Long Island. That may explain why she liked to be outside on the street so much. It also explains why she walked with a limp all her life. But that didn't keep her from her high energy efforts to fight on behalf of school children, tenants, the police, and the people of Park Slope.

In fact, according to Deputy Inspector Thomas Harris, who met Connor during his days as commanding officer of Park Slope's 78th Precinct, she "knew the good, the bad and the ugly. She was there morning, noon and night. We'll have to put six cops on Seventh Avenue to make up for her."

She was also famous for spontaneous protests. Whether it was to help a tenant avoid eviction or fight on behalf of a local merchant, she was always ready with signs, hand-made petitions.

"She was my guardian angel and took care of me," said Fonda Sara, the owner of Zuzu's Petals, which was burned out of its Seventh Avenue location in 2004.

"Minutes after the fire happened, Jackie did not leave the store next door to the store for days. She collected money for Zuzu's," she wrote letters. She assured me that we would rebuild."

And she had strong opinions. "She didn't speak to me for six months after I painted the doors of the church purple," remembers Pastor Daniel Meeter of Old First Reformed Church. "But she was an important person to me and I worked hard to win her back."

If you were a special friend (and there were many) she'd give you an angel coin, which she'd buy at the Clay Pot, a store where she was always welcome. Artistic by nature, she also made paper angels with always inscriptions that many in the audience still treasure.

Renee Dinnerstein, a former kindergarten teacher at PS 321, remembered how Jackie pitched in to paint her son's pre-kindergarten classroom. Together with Dinnerstein's husband, they painted the walls of PS 321 with the blessing of then-principal William Casey.

Another educator, Dr. Annette Hall, of St. Francis Xavier School, told how students at her school recently interviewed Jackie for the school newspaper. "You notice I don't have any hair?" she said to the children. "Well, I have a tumor. And I call it Bruce. I named it after Bruce Ramey."

George McLaughlin, Jackie's "baby" brother, summed it up best: "Jackie never left here because she loved Brooklyn. The grittiness, the ability to deal with adversity. She was comfortable around people who lived their lives through their hearts. And Jackie was one who did."

Along with her brother and daughter, Connor is survived by her husband, Charles, and her three sons, Jamie, Kerry and Ryan.

## GLITZ...

Continued from page 1

will include a swimming pool, a gym and an indoor basketball court, as well as the squash court, according to developer, Ron Herskoff, who previously built the Toy Factory Lofts nearby.

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The new level doesn't please everyone Downtown. "I want to know who wants Brooklyn to look like Manhattan," asked Vincent Battista, president of the Institute of Design and Construction located one block south on Flatbush Avenue Extension. Battista has opposed the Downtown Brooklyn Plan since its creators threatened to use the power of eminent domain to demolish his college to build a park.

"And the question is," he added, "who will be able to afford it when it does?"

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March 18, 2006

# Reel reunion

Fort Greene's Spike Lee reunites with Denzel for 'Inside Man'

By Karen Butler  
for The Brooklyn Papers

Although "Inside Man," the latest film by Brooklyn-raised auteur Spike Lee, hasn't even hit theaters yet, Lee tells GO Brooklyn that he and the film's two-time Oscar-winning star, Denzel Washington, are already looking for another project to do together.

A contemporary heist movie set in downtown Manhattan, "Inside Man" — which will be released on Friday, March 24 — is the pair's fourth collaboration and the first film they have made together as director and actor since the 1998 basketball story, "He Got Game."

"We don't know what it's going to be, but we know we want to work together soon," the 49-year-old Fort Greene filmmaker told reporters in Manhattan recently, adding they don't intend to let so much time elapse between projects again.

Asked if he thinks of himself and Washington as this generation's Martin Scorsese and Robert De Niro, Lee replied, "We've got a couple more films to do. How many did they do together? Let's count them."

Rattling off the titles "Mean Streets," "Raging Bull," "Goodfellas," "Taxi Driver" and "Casino," the die-hard Knicks fan laughed. "Five, right? One more!"

All joking aside, Lee says Washington's natural talent, coupled with the fact they know each other so well, makes for an excellent working relationship on movie sets.

"A lot of my directing, we do in the rehearsal process. You don't want to start discussing character motivations and stuff like that on the set. So, we do a lot of that in rehearsal," explained the graduate of Morehouse College in Atlanta and New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

"Denzel is a wonderful actor," he added. "He's one of the greatest actors ever, definitely [one of the best] working today. You have to understand that there is a reason why that is, and so I'm not going to be interrupting him all the time, telling him, 'Denzel, do this, do this, do this.' Also, this is the fourth time we've worked together — 'Mo' Better Blues,' 'Malcolm X,' 'He Got Game' and 'Inside Man' — so we're very comfortable working with each other."

"There is a shorthand," Washington agreed. "I like working with Spike. It's familiar territory. I like going to Brooklyn [where Lee shoots many of his films]. Being able to rehearse and walk around the corner and have the art department and everything there. It's like coming home for me, I was born and raised [in New York]."

Lee and Washington are so comfortable with each other, in fact, the handsome actor says he feels free to ad-lib some of his dialogue.

"I started improvising with Spike 17 years ago on 'Mo' Better Blues," Washington recalled. "That's the first time I can remember, just fooling around and setting the scenario. It was a scene in 'Mo' Better Blues where we were just coming off stage, and I sort of get in an argument with Wesley Snipes's character. That's one of the first times I can remember [thinking], 'OK, let's improve.'"

## Risky business

In "Inside Man," a film in which he also improvised numerous memorable lines, Washington plays an NYPD detective called in to handle a financial-district bank robbery that quickly escalates into a hostage situation.

"Six City" star Clive Owen heads the team of robbers, while "Silence of the Lambs" actress Jodie Foster plays a mysterious woman sent into the besieged bank by a wealthy client willing to pay the thieves almost anything to ignore the contents of a particular safe-deposit box and leave the bank.



On the set: Director Spike Lee (center) talks with "Inside Man" castmembers Clive Owen (as bank robber Dalton Russell, left) and Denzel Washington, as Detective Keith Frazier. (At left) Washington with Jodie Foster, who plays a power broker with a hidden agenda, in a scene from Lee's hostage drama.



"The hardest thing, I would say, was getting the many threads to many different stories going and to try and have it all come together at the end," Lee admitted. "So, when you do something like that, you film it, but the hard part comes in the editing process."

Although Foster plays a basically unlikeable character and Owen's chiseled features are covered by a mask throughout most of the movie, producer Brian Grazer says he never felt "Inside Man" was a particularly risky project.

"I don't think it's about taking a chance," said Ron Howard's long-time producing partner. "I think that what we tried to do was make a very effective thriller that has this red herring, which is sort of this extra component that helps it transcend the genre in

some way. But I think that we're gifted to have these tremendous actors, and I think that having these actors on the one-sheet [poster] or in a 30-second [advertising] spot or the trailer is a virtue that we're embracing and, of course, people all know that Spike Lee is a master filmmaker."

Describing the movie as a "word-of-mouth" film and stopping short of predicting an opening-weekend, box-office number, Grazer assured: "I think it will do well."

## Storytelling tradition

After two decades of making high-profile films, two of which earned him Oscar nominations, Lee insists he still doesn't regard himself as a "celebrity," nor does he think his peers consider him one.

"I don't know about the word 'celebrity,'" he said. "When I think of Denzel and Clive and Jodie and Christopher Plummer, I don't think of them as 'celebrities.' I think of them just as great artists. That's just my problem with the word 'celebrity.' I don't think of myself as having elevated status. That's just not the way I think of myself."

"We're very happy that this year, we're going to do several things throughout the whole year to celebrate 20 years of making film," said Lee. "But it's not just a celebration of me, it's a celebration of the body of work and the people who have been part of that over 20 years."

"It's not just me," he emphasized. "Gordon Parks just passed. Ossie Davis, those are individuals that made it possible for myself. The grand-daddy of them all, Oscar Micheaux, Melvin Van Peebles, those men enabled me to tell a story."

To illustrate his point about his place in the filmmaking pantheon, Lee recalls meeting an enthusiastic moviegoer in front of a Los Angeles movie theater when "She's Gotta Have It" opened in 1986.

"After the movie let out, this skinny kid with thick glasses said: 'Hello, my name is John Singleton. I'm in high school, and I want to make movies like you.' True story. So, it's the evolution. People now make movies inspired by John's film, 'Boyz n the Hood.' So, you've got to keep it going."

Spike Lee's "Inside Man" opens in movie theaters on March 24.

## TV



## Saucy contest

Andrew Schumacher seems like a regular guy. He lives in Carroll Gardens, is married, has an 11-month-old daughter and has a job in "the city," but he is not your typical Brooklynite.

The 26-year-old medical school applicant-turned-cook has landed a spot as a finalist on the reality TV show, "The Next Food Network Star."

My wife has been my biggest inspiration," Schumacher said of spouse Carrie's support of his career switch. "She got me into cooking; she got me into trying all these different foods that I had never had, like sushi among other things. When she was in grad school, I would be at home cooking dinner for her and once she saw how much I liked it, she encouraged me. I came to New York to go to culinary school, and she made the journey with me. It's been unbelievable."

Schumacher and Carrie met in their home state, Iowa, where both attended the University of Iowa. Once Schumacher was sure about his career choice, the two moved to New York, where Schumacher attended the French Culinary Institute. He then got a job as a line cook at AIX, a restaurant on Manhattan's Upper West Side, but was forced to quit when it was clear his dream job of being a chef in the city wasn't going to pay the bills.

After Schumacher got a job as a logistics manager at the New York Blood Center, he then got his break as one of the eight finalists for the Food Network show. During filming, he had to spend three weeks away from Carrie and their baby Sierra, in a situation that was very surreal, he said.

"It's kind of like a retreat," said Schumacher of "Next Food Network Star," where he shared airtime with superstar chefs Mario Batali, Masaharu Morimoto and Bobby Flay (pictured above right with Schumacher). "The thing about the show was everyone on it was an extrovert personality, so there was a lot of energy but no animosity. There was a lot of downtime when we were in the [waiting room] — for what seemed like forever — and it made it a little nerve-racking. Overall it was a great experience and everyone genuinely liked each other."

On the season premiere, Schumacher is perceived by the judges as proficient and skillful with his food and recipes, but a little out of touch and impersonal with the television audience. As one of his first challenges, he prepares a dish using his favorite ingredient, pork, a meat that Schumacher believes is symbolic of his Midwestern roots and is also complementary to many other foods.

Schumacher's lips were sealed about the premiere's finale, so readers will need to tune in to find out if he escapes elimination and makes it to the episode two.

Currently, Schumacher is focusing on his Manhattan-based business, Nappants Catering. (The word "nappants," chosen by Schumacher and his partner Chef Kevin Bradley, means "perfect consistency" in French.)

"The success of a French chef is judged by how he can make a sauce," Schumacher said. "Nappants is symbolic for the quality of work that we do here, reaching the perfect consistency."

"The Next Food Network Star" season two premiere airs Sunday, March 19, at 9 pm on the Food Network. Nappants Catering is located at Broadway and 88th Street in Manhattan. For more information, call (212) 877-2233.

—Eleanor Gorenstein

## CINEMA

## 'Good' couple

The real Joe and Shirley Wershb — played by Robert Downey Jr. and Patricia Clarkson (pictured) in George Clooney's "Good Night, and Good Luck" — will participate in a discussion with Brooklyn College professors Anthony Mancini and Foster Hirsch, following a screening of the film at the school's Whitman Hall on Monday.

The Wershs were colleagues of legendary journalist Edward R. Murrow, whose courageous 1953 broadcasts on CBS's "See It Now," concerning U.S. Sen. Joe McCarthy, were recreated in the film. (The Wershs' covert romance is another highlight.)

Emmy Award-winning Joe Wersha, a member of Brooklyn College's class of 1941, and Shirley Lubowitz Wersha, class of 1945, are broadcast pioneers; while Joe was a producer on "See It Now" and "60 Minutes," Shirley was one of the original producers on PBS's "MacNeil/Lehrer Report."

The event, which is free and open to the public, begins at 3:30 pm on Monday, March 20, Whitman Hall is located on the campus of Brooklyn College, 2900 Campus Rd. at Flatbush Avenue in Midwood. For more information, contact the college's Office of Alumni Affairs at (718) 957-5065.

—Lisa J. Curtis

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Cono & Sons O'Pescatore in Williamsburg has an elegant decor evoked by crisp, white tablecloths and black, lacquered chairs. As the name suggests, this is a place for serious seafood enthusiasts prepared with Italian flair.

Chef Cono Natale's signature dishes include the Contadina, a mouthwatering mixture of veal, sausage, beef and chicken, prepared with peppers, mushrooms and potatoes (\$39.95 for two or more) and the "barnacle of pasta," an assortment of clams, shrimp, mussels, whiting, squid and fillet of sole served with rice (also \$39.95, for at least two people). There's something for everyone: homemade cavatelli, veal chops alla Cono, shrimp fra diavolo and fried scallops. Caprese and a traditional Italian dessert (cheesecake, spumoni and more) ensure a happy ending. On Tuesdays, any bottle of wine is half-price. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

#### Peter Luger Steak House

178 Broadway at Driggs Avenue, (718) 387-7400, [www.peterluger.com](http://www.peterluger.com) (Cash only) Entrees: \$7.95-\$36.95.

This legendary Williamsburg steakhouse, at the foot of the bridge, has been rated No. 1 in Zagat's for the last 20 years — and for good reason. New York's best steaks are served here in a German beer hall setting — principally Peter Luger's famous porterhouse for two — juicy, tender and delicious. Each USDA Prime dry-aged steak, say co-owner Judy Storch, is personally selected by herself, her mother or her aunt. The restaurant also serves broiled salmon, lemon sole and lamb chops, but if you've made it this far, go for the steak and their signature German-fried potatoes. Entrees, of course, you can order before 3 p.m. Then you can try one of the best deals in the city — the lunchtime-only Luger Burger (under \$10 with mustard and the thick-cut bacon). One of the tastiest and juiciest around, it starts at just \$7.95. Desserts include apple strudel, pecan pie and chocolate mousse, served with house-made German "schlag" (whipped cream). Oh, and the bar stocks a good selection of beers on tap and makes a mean martini. Open daily for lunch and dinner.

#### S.E.A. Thai Bistro

114 N. Sixth St. at Berry Street, (718) 384-8850, [www.spcny.net](http://www.spcny.net) (MC, Visa) Entrees: \$7-\$14.

Zen meets disco in this Williamsburg eatery, owned by Kanda Vachirabongkorn, S.E.A. (South East Asia) Thai Bistro offers an eclectic mix of Thai and Western music Thursday through Sunday, and center stage, a large pool presided over by a life-size Buddha with a small wooden boat filled with lush floral arrangements floating about his ankles. Two bars serve designer drinks, like their pomegranate mojito or strawberry guava martini, to a clientele of young hipsters. Chef Leo Sanguan's menu, a range of seafood, noodle and curry dishes, includes "drunk man noodle," a mixture of broad noodles, chicken, squid, shrimp and egg in a spicy basil sauce; jumbo shrimp in a clay pot; and seafood dumplings. Specials, such as mussels in light, clear lemongrass broth, are offered daily. All the dishes are beautifully arranged. Manager Wade Schemmazzini says that "the best entree, and most ordered around here, would have to be the pad Thai, a rice noodle dish served with scallops, bean sprouts, peanuts, with either chicken or shrimp." Open daily for lunch and dinner.

#### 718 B-KLYN Diner

236 Kent Ave. at North Third Street, (718) 963-0802, [www.misswilliamsburg.com](http://www.misswilliamsburg.com) (Cash only) Entrees: \$18-\$20.

Don't let the austere orange and gray facade fool you. Beyond the doors of this vintage 1940s dining car, formerly known as "Miss Williamsburg," is a haven for pasta lovers. Take over-chef Massimo (Max) Bartoli's famous "Emilia Romagna Lasagna," which in March 2004, won the title of "The Ultimate Lasagna" on the Food Network's "Tyler's Ultimate." Co-owner Pilar Rigan recommends the grilled-skewered calamari, chocolate soufflé and

★ = Full review available at

**Brooklyn Papers** .com

Abbreviation Key: AmEx= American Express, DC= Diner's Club, Disc= Discover Card, MC= MasterCard, Visa= Visa Card

# Suspect scent

Fort Greene restaurant June doesn't just sound like summer, it smells like it, too

By Tina Barry  
For The Brooklyn Papers

What could be more enticing on a chilly evening than a restaurant named June? The word promises so much: a respite from the long dull winter and the beginning of exciting times in the city.

June is owned by Charles McMickens, who was the proprietor of Sol, a Latin Caribbean eatery that occupied the space before June opened last winter. The eatery, McMickens says, is named for his favorite time of year, a month that "offers good times for family and friends."

With June's three chic rooms, he's established a laid-back ambience for dinner and celebration. Above the bar in the front room are hanging lamps that resemble black mesh hair curlers; the walls are hand-textured and hung with lush, black-and-white drawings. Along the narrow room that connects the front area to a back lounge are intimate dining nooks created by tables enclosed on two sides by beaded chain drapes. Little of the restaurant's design was left to chance, down to the carved white marble candleholders on the tables.

And yet, a few thoughts about the rooms made me uneasy: one of the lights was burned out, leaving a dim glow above the bar; and someone tried — and failed — at removing a large sticker from our table top, and I had a tough time not picking at it during dinner.

And then, there's the aroma. If I walk into a place and enticing scents emanate from the kitchen, great; good smells mean delicious things are cooking. But on one recent Sunday evening, the air was chilly,



The Brooklyn Papers: Tina Barry

## DINING

June (229 DeKalb Ave. at Clermont Avenue in Fort Greene) accepts American Express, MasterCard and Visa. Entrees: \$8-\$18. The restaurant serves dinner daily. Brunch is available on Sundays, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. For reservations, call (718) 222-1510.

Heaven sent: At Fort Greene's June restaurant, the chocolate pot au creme is worth a taste.

roundup of dishes like "wakame seaweed salad," chicken pot pie, and fried calamari with marinara sauce, I got turned off. Something for everyone usually means nothing for me.

While my initial foreboding wasn't entirely correct, I wasn't too far off. The cuisine, created by Rafael Fernandez, was a bit like the decor; there were admirable attempts throughout, but with the exception of a good milk chocolate pot au creme and a well-sea-

son with a tinge of something damp and sour.

Another clue that I'm not about to partake of the meal of my dreams: a hodge-podge of a menu. After perusing June's "American eclectic"

## Give me some sugar

Trends in restaurant decor come and go. The latest in horizontal dining is the brainchild of Freddy and Angelika Saint-Aignan, who co-own Columbia Street's Sugar Lounge. Come spring, they're hanging hammocks in their garden, so you can swing while you dine and sip a "Margarita Sugarita" (vodka, apple and lime juice). Talk about multitasking!

Until the weather wars up, hang out in Sugar Lounge's curby-tube bar and make a meal of their finger foods.

"We're serving mostly French, Asian and North African tapas, but not together. Nothing fusion," says Freddy, who was the manager at Smith Street's Bar Tabac before he opened Sugar Lounge in June. Angelika, a photographer, operates a catering service for photo shoots out of the same location.

One dish that you'll have to enjoy upright is the Swiss answer to comfort food, "raclette" (pictured at right), in which you melt Emmentaler cheese and pour it over bread, oven-steamed potatoes and prosciutto. More familiar plates feature cheese hummus or baba ghanoush (the Middle Eastern chickpea and eggplant spreads) served with warm pita bread; shrimp cocktail and burgers.

In addition to those small plates, there are hearty entrees, like the file

soned strip steak, the flavors were muddled.

I'll begin with the most unfortunate dish: lobster bisque. How could lobster bisque go wrong? Let me count the ways: If the waiter is five feet from the table and out of the two small cups he's carrying waits the color of the pre-Bronx-move Fulton Street Fish Market, I get nervous. If I taste herring — not lobster — that's bad. And if the texture resembles ground eggshells, it's time to run for the hills.

The meal improved after the soup debacle. A crisp lump crab cake that sat atop a bed of "wakame" seaweed was crowned with slivers of "kimchi" (spicy Korean pickled cabbage) and sprinkled with black sesame seeds. There was a pleasing blend of soft and crunchy textures, but the appetizer lacked finesse. So did two pretty cylinders of fried phyllo dough filled with roasted shitake mushrooms, carrots and spinach. The "strudels" were crisp but under-seasoned, and the two squiggles of sauces — a pungent, garlicky one and a bland, red pepper coulis — didn't help.

An entree of nicely seared, but tasteless, salmon coated with kaffir lime glaze wasn't a winner by its sides — a stringy watermelon mango salsa and a scoop of moist jasmine rice — either. I enjoyed a tender New York strip steak covered with a tangy layer of "salsa verde" (chopped "tomatillos" — the Mexican fruit that tastes like a tart tomato — chilies, garlic, cilantro and lime juice).

The meat emerged sizzling and smoky from the grill with a bite of garlic. A side of mashed potatoes was fine, but the beef overpowered slices of accompanying marinated eggplant in a tart olive oil and vinegar marinade.

I wish I could say that the coffee that ended the meal was rich and complemented the chocolate pot au creme perfectly, but the brew was weak. And an apple galette (a thin round of pastry topped with sliced fruit), with vanilla bean cream sauce, was just okay.

Three years ago, I included Sol in a story about Nuevo Latino cooking. I remember the room being lively, the menu cohesive, and the dishes light and vibrant. A sequel should be an improvement on the first, but that's not the case with June. Compared to Sol, June might as well be January.



The Brooklyn Papers: Tina Barry

mignon, that can be enjoyed in the lounge where silk-covered day beds, strewn with Thai pillows, make intimate dining.

Sugar Lounge (1474 Columbia St., between Kane and DeGraw streets, in the Columbia Street Waterfront District) accepts MasterCard and Visa. Small plates: \$5-\$9; entrees: \$7-\$19.95. The restaurant serves dinner Tuesday through Sunday. Starting April 1, brunch will be available on weekends, from noon to 4 p.m. For information, call (718) 643-2680.

— Tina Barry

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